

LEGENDARY 1950s EC COMICS!

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF FEAR[®]



NO. 23
MAY



250
365
CANADA

FEAR
FEATURING...



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



GHASTLY

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! SO YOU GOT YOUR GRIMY PAWS ON SOME OF YOUR OLD MAN'S DIMES, BOUGHT MY MUCK-MAG, AND NOW YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER SLIME-SERVING FROM MY CAULDRON HERE IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, EH? WELL, TUCK YOUR DROOL GUPS UNDER YOUR DOUBLE CHINS, KNOT YOUR NAPKINS AROUND YOUR NUBBY NECKS, AND YOUR DELIRIUM DIETICIAN, YOUR REEKING-RESTAURATEUR, YOUR MORBID-MENU-MAKER, THE OLD WITCH, WILL DISH OUT ANOTHER OF HER REVOLTING RECIPES. READY? GOOD! THEN HERE GOES WITH THE NAUSEATING NOVELETTE I CALL...

CREEP COURSE

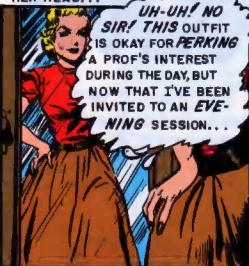


STELLA'S FURNISHED ROOM WASN'T VERY FAR FROM THE UNIVERSITY. IN FACT, FROM HER FRONT WINDOW, SHE COULD SEE THE TOWER OF MEMORIAL HALL RISING ABOVE THE ROOFTOPS. SHE'D HURRIED THE FEW BLOCKS FROM THE CAMPUS, FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR, TOSSED HER BOOKS ON A CHAIR, AND NOW SHE STOOD GAZING OUT OVER THE COLLEGE TOWN AND SMILING A TRIUMPHANT SMILE...

"ANCIENT CIVILIZATION!" YOU'RE ONE COURSE I WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANY MORE!



STELLA TURNED AND GRINNED AT HER REFLECTION IN THE FULL-LENGTH MIRROR ON THE CLOSET DOOR. SHE EYED HER BALLERINA SHOES, HER FULL SKIRT, HER TIGHT-FITTING SWEATER, AND SHE SHOOK HER HEAD...



UH-UH! NO SIR! THIS OUTFIT IS OKAY FOR PERKING A PROF'S INTEREST DURING THE DAY, BUT NOW THAT I'VE BEEN INVITED TO AN EVENING SESSION...

STELLA SWUNG OPEN THE CLOSET AND UNHOOKED HER VERY BEST STRAPLESS FROM THE RACK...



...IT'S TIME TO ROLL OUT THE BIG GUNS!

HI, STELLA SAY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

IT WAS MITZI, STELLA'S ROOMMATE. SHE CROSSED THE SMALL ROOM AND FINGERED THE EVENING GOWN



GOT A HEAVY DATE TONIGHT, MITZI!

IT ISN'T A BLIND DATE, I HOPE, I WOULDN'T FOOL AROUND WITH ANY BLIND DATE THESE DAYS!

STELLA SCOFFED...

OH, CUT IT, MITZI. SO A FEW STUDENTS DISAPPEAR FROM THE CAMPUS. IS THAT ANY REASON TO START UGLY RUMORS ABOUT MANIACS AND MURDERERS AND STUFF LIKE THAT?!



I DIDN'T START THE RUMORS, STELLA. I'M JUST REPEATING WHAT I HEARD. WHO'S THE GUY?

WELL...IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO TELL! IT'S... PROFESSOR FINLEY!

PROFESSOR FINLEY!? THE 'ANCIENT CIVILIZATION' TEACHER?! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? WHY, HE'S AN OLD CREEP!



HE MAY BE AN OLD CREEP, MITZ, BUT IF I DON'T PASS 'ANCIENT CIVILIZATION', I DON'T GRADUATE. AND WHAT I KNOW ABOUT ANCIENT CIVILIZATION WOULDN'T FILL A THIMBLE.



OH, I GET IT! GONNA VAMP 'IM, EH?

GONNA TRY! DON'T FORGET! NOT A WORD! I PROMISED HIM I WOULDN'T TELL A SOUL.

WELL, HAVE FUN, STELLA. I GOTTA RUN. THE GANG'S OVER AT MORREY'S. WE'RE GONNA HAVE A JAM SESSION. DON'T WORRY! YOUR SECRET'S SAFE WITH ME...



MITZI! LEFT AND STELLA STRETCHED OUT ON THE BED. SHE SMILED IMPISHLY...

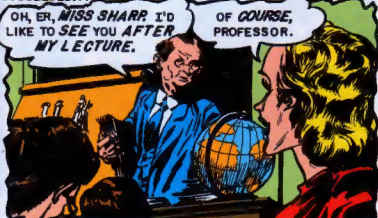
POOR PROFESSOR FINLEY! IF HE ONLY KNEW WHAT HE WAS LETTING HIMSELF IN FOR!



IT WAS GOING TO BE SO SIMPLE. STELLA'D PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY, EVER SINCE THAT FIRST WEEK... WHEN THEY'D COVERED EGYPTIAN CULTURE AND SHE'D KNOWN SHE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO PASS THAT COURSE, WHAT WITH GREECE AND ROME YET TO COME... SHE'D WORKED ON PROFESSOR FINLEY. AND THIS AFTERNOON, SHE'D FINALLY SUCCEEDED...

OH, ER, MISS SHARR, I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU AFTER MY LECTURE.

OF COURSE, PROFESSOR.



SHE'D BEEN SO CAREFUL ABOUT HER MAKE-UP. SHE'D WORN HER MOST FLATTERING SWEATERS. SHE'D SAT CROSS-LEGGED IN CLASS TILL HER MUSCLES HAD ACED, AND HE'D FINALLY BITTEN...

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, PROFESSOR?

LAST NIGHT I READ YOUR PAPER ON THE 'FALL OF ROME,' MISS SHARP. FRANKLY, I'M A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU'VE GRASPED FROM MY LECTURES!

I...I'M A LITTLE WORRIED MYSELF, PROFESSOR. I'VE TRIED! HONESTLY, I'VE TRIED! BUT I JUST HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD...

I THOUGHT I'D MADE THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS QUITE CLEAR, MISS SHARP. I FEEL TERRIBLE. HAVE I COVERED TOO MUCH GROUND TOO FAST FOR YOU?

PERHAPS... IF YOU REVIEWED IT FOR ME, PROFESSOR... SAY... SOME EVENING?

THAT... ER... THAT WOULD BE HIGHLY IRREGULAR, MISS SHARP! THE FACULTY FROWNS ON FRATERNIZATION...



OH! I... I SEE! WELL... I... I WOULDN'T WANT TO GET YOU INTO ANY KIND OF TROUBLE...

ER... PERHAPS... IF NO ONE KNEW... IF IT WAS... SAY... OUR LITTLE SECRET... I MEAN... WELL... I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU, MISS SHARP! YOU'RE A... VERY NICE... ER... AH... GIRL... COUGH...



HE'D BITTEN, ALL RIGHT. HE'D SUCKED IN THE BAIT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER...

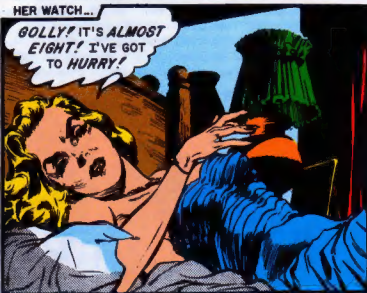
OH, I WOULDN'T TELL A SOUL, PROFESSOR. NOT A SOUL! THIS IS SO SWEET OF YOU! I... I COULD KISS YOU...

AHEM... YES... ER... WELL THEN, SHALL WE SAY... TONIGHT... AT EIGHT... AT MY HOUSE? YOU'LL... ER... MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT SEEN!



STELLA YAWNED AND STRETCHED. SHE LOOKED AT HER WATCH...

GOLLY! IT'S ALMOST EIGHT! I'VE GOT TO HURRY!



PROFESSOR FINLEY'S HOUSE WAS ONE OF THOSE OLD FASHIONED MONSTROSITIES THAT HAD ONCE BEEN VERY STYLISH. STELLA LIFTED THE HUGE DOOR KNOCKER. THE HOLLOW BOOM ECHOED DOWN LONG CORRIDORS AND UP STEEP STAIRCASES AND DIED AWAY IN DARK CORNERS WITHIN. THE DOOR SQUEAKED OPEN...

MISS SHARP? IS THAT YOU?

YES, PROFESSOR! IT'S ME!



STELLA SWIRLED THROUGH THE DOOR, MOVING LITHELY, TRYING TO LOOK VERY DESIRABLE...

SHE WATCHED HIS BEADY LITTLE EYES SWEEP OVER HER. YES. 'ANCIENT CIVILIZATION' WAS ONE COURSE SHE WASN'T GOING TO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT...

ALL RIGHT ... ER... STELLA. COME... COME INTO THE LIBRARY!

OH, WHAT A LOVELY HOUSE! EVERYTHING IS SO...SO... INTERESTING!



WHY, MISS SHARP? YOU'RE ALL DRESSED UP!

OH, THIS?! IT'S JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING I PICKED UP FOR COCKTAILS! LIKE IT?

IT'S...IT'S A VERY NICE GOWN, MISS SHARP. YOU... YOU LOOK VERY LOVELY!

CALL ME STELLA, PROFESSOR!



STELLA HID HER *REAL* FEELINGS. THE *INSIDE* OF THE HOUSE WAS WORSE THAN THE *OUTSIDE*. THERE WERE STATUES WHEREVER ONE LOOKED... MARBLE BUSTS OF ROMAN EMPERORS... FULL LENGTH POSES OF MIGHTY ROMAN WARRIORS... ROMAN POETS, WRITERS, MATHEMATICIANS. COLUMNS LINED THE WALLS, BETWEEN WHICH WERE HUNG PAINTINGS OF ANCIENT ROMAN SCENES.

PROFESSOR FINLEY OPENED A SMALL DOOR AT THE END OF THE HALL. HE MOTIONED STELLA DOWN THE STEPS...

DO YOU FIND IT INTERESTING, MISS...ER... STELLA? COME! I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING REALLY INTERESTING...

IT'S IN THE CELLAR! COME...

THE CELLAR?! LORD! WHAT I WON'T DO TO GRADUATE!



STELLA DESCENDED THE STEPS SLOWLY, THINKING TO HERSELF...

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS THROW MY ARMS AROUND HIM AND KISS HIM AND HE'S A DEAD DUCK! HE WON'T DARE FLUNK ME. POOR PROFESSOR FINLEY!

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED ROMAN CULTURE, STELLA!

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS WAS ANOTHER DOOR... A MASSIVE OAK DOOR...

OPEN IT, STELLA! SURE, PROFESSOR!

STELLA OPENED IT. PROFESSOR FINLEY PUSHED. STELLA SPRAWLED THROUGH...

PROFESSOR! HEH, HEH, HEH!

THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND STELLA. THE LOCK SNAPPED. PROFESSOR FINLEY'S MANIACAL LAUGH ECHOED THROUGH...

PROFESSOR. MY GOD! WHAT IS THIS! LET ME OUT!

HEH, HEH, HEH, HEH, HEH!

FOOTSTEPS FADED AWAY UP THE CELLAR STAIRS. STELLA SCREAMED AFTER THEM. SUDDENLY, STELLA'S BLOOD FROZE. SHE HEARD THE LOW-THROATED GROWL...

WHO... WHO'S THERE? HE'S GOT ANOTHER ONE! YOU POOR KID!

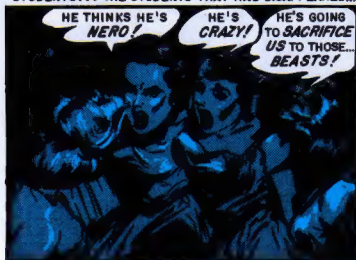
STELLA PEERED INTO THE GLOOM. SHE SEEMED TO BE IN SOME SORT OF HUGE ROOM. THERE WERE OTHER FIGURES HUDDLED TOGETHER IN THE CENTER OF THE FLOOR...

WHO... WHO ARE YOU? HE'S MAD! HE TRAPPED US THE SAME WAY HE TRAPPED YOU! THIS IS HIS COLOSSEUM! SEE? SEE THE CAGES...?

AT THE OTHER END OF THE CAVERNOUS CELLAR CHAMBER, STELLA COULD SEE THE BARS... AND BEHIND THEM, THE BURNING YELLOW EYES AND THE GLEAMING TEETH...

HE'S GOT A LION BACK THERE... AND A TIGER... ...A GORILLA! WE'RE TO BE HIS CHRISTIAN MARTYRS! OH, NO! NO!

STELLA'S EYES WERE BECOMING ACCUSTOMED TO THE DARKNESS NOW. SHE COULD SEE THE OTHERS... YOUNG GIRLS LIKE HERSELF...SHIVERING IN THE DARK DAMPNESS. SHE RECOGNIZED THEM. THEY WERE STUDENTS... THE STUDENTS THAT HAD DISAPPEARED...



HE THINKS HE'S NERO!

HE'S CRAZY!

HE'S GOING TO SACRIFICE US TO THOSE... BEASTS!

SUDDENLY THE CELLAR REVERBERATED WITH A RECORDED TRUMPET FANFARE. THE LIGHTS WENT ON. STELLA BLINKED. THE SAND FLOOR OF THE CELLAR WAS STAINED RED. IN THEIR CAGES, THE ANIMALS ROARED, DROOLING HUNGRILY...



GREETINGS, MY BELOVED SUBJECTS!

LOOK!

GOOD LORD!

PROFESSOR FINLEY ENTERED A DRAPED BOX. HE HAD DISCARDED HIS DRESSING GOWN AND NOW STOOD PROUDLY IN A WHITE ROMAN TOGA, A WREATH OF LAUREL ON HIS HEAD...



NERO, EMPEROR OF ALL ROME, WELCOMES YOU!

PROFESSOR! HAVE PITY!

STELLA AND THE OTHER GIRLS HUDDLED TOGETHER, WHIMPERING, AS THE MAD MAN RAISED HIS WINE GLASS...



LET THE CELEBRATION BEGIN...

BEHIND HIS SCREENED BOX, PROFESSOR FINLEY PRESSED A BUTTON... THEN ANOTHER. STELLA SCREAMED. THE BARS OF THE CAGES ROLLED OPEN...



EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

THE LION SNARLED. THE TIGER PADDED TOWARD THEM. THE GORILLA POUNDED HIS CHEST, WADDLING OUT OF HIS CAGE. THE CELLAR RESOUNDED WITH THE HYSTERICAL SHRIEKINGS OF THE HELPLESS GIRLS...

YAAAAAAAH HHHHGGHHH!



AND AS THE SHRIEKS AND SCREAMS ROSE TO A CRESCENDO, HARMONIZING IN A HORROR SYMPHONY WITH THE ROARS OF THE BLOOD-STARVED BEASTS, THE MANIAC MUNCHED GRAPES AND STRUMMED HIS LYRE AND WATCHED THE RIPPING... THE TEARING... THE VERY DEATH SCENE HIS MANIACAL COUNTERPART HAD WATCHED NINETEEN CENTURIES AGO...



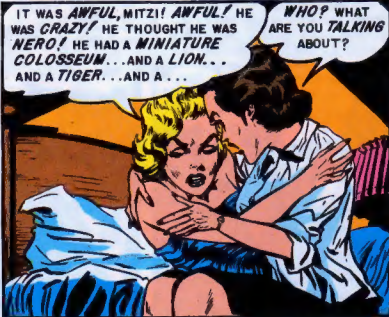
STELLA SCREAMED. MITZI SHOOK HER AGAIN.
STELLA SAT UP, WIDE-EYED...



GOLLY! YOU WERE
HAVING A HECK OF A
NIGHTMARE!

HUH! OH,
MITZI... SOB...
MITZI!

STELLA CLUNG TO HER ROOMMATE, SOBBING...



IT WAS **AWFUL**, MITZI! **AWFUL!** HE
WAS **CRAZY!** HE THOUGHT HE WAS
NERO! HE HAD A **MINIATURE**
COLOSSEUM... AND A **LION...**
AND A **TIGER...** AND A...

WHO? WHAT
ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

PROFESSOR FINLEY!
HE HAD THOSE **THREE**
GIRLS THAT DIS-
APPEARED FROM
THE CAMPUS IN HIS
CELLAR! AND I...
PROFESSOR
FINLEY?
THAT OLD CREEPY! HE
WOULDN'T
HURT A FLY!
IT SURE WAS
A DREAM, BABY!



BUT, IT WAS SO
REAL! HIS **WHOLE**
HOUSE WAS DONE IN
ROMAN! **STATUES**
EVERYWHERE! **BUSTS!**
PAINTINGS OF **ROMAN**
SCENES. IT WAS
AWFUL!



SAY, DON'T
YOU HAVE A
DATE WITH
HIM?

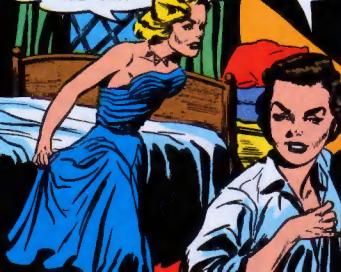
OH... **GOLLY!**
WHAT TIME
IS IT?

QUARTER AFTER
EIGHT!



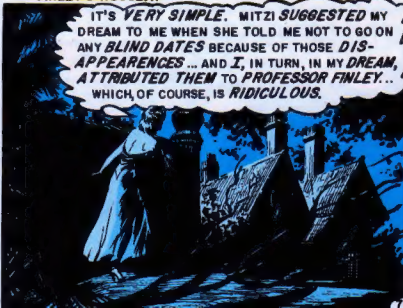
STELLA LEAPED FROM THE BED...

DREAM OR NO DREAM...I'M
GOING TO GET THAT SHEEPSKIN!
SEE YOU...



GOOD LUCK,
HONEY...

SHE HURRIED DOWN DARK STREETS TO PROFESSOR
FINLEY'S HOUSE...



IT'S **VERY SIMPLE.** MITZI SUGGESTED MY
DREAM TO ME WHEN SHE TOLD ME NOT TO GO ON
ANY **BLIND DATES** BECAUSE OF THOSE **DIS-**
APPEARANCES... AND I, IN TURN, IN MY DREAM,
ATTRIBUTED THEM TO **PROFESSOR FINLEY...**
WHICH, OF COURSE, IS **RIDICULOUS.**

PROFESSOR FINLEY'S HOUSE WASN'T AT ALL AS STELLA HAD DREAMED IT. THERE WAS NO DOORKNOCKER. INSTEAD, SOFT CHIMES SANG FROM WITHIN AS SHE TOUCHED THE BUTTON...



MISS SHARP! YES, IS THAT YOU? PROFESSOR! IT'S ME!

STELLA SWIRLED THROUGH THE DOOR. THIS WAS NO DREAM NOW! THIS WAS IT!



WHY, MISS SHARP! YOU'RE ALL DRESSED UP! OH, THIS?! IT'S JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING I PICKED UP FOR COCKTAILS! LIKE IT?

SHE WATCHED HER BEADY LITTLE EYES SWEEP OVER HER. YES, 'ANCIENT CIVILIZATION' WAS ONE COURSE...



COME WITH ME, MISS SHARP! WE'LL GET STARTED... CALL ME STELLA, PROFESSOR!

PROFESSOR FINLEY LED STELLA DOWN A LONG HALL TO A HUGE DOOR. HE SWUNG IT OPEN...



WELL, THANK GOODNESS, PROFESSOR! I WOULD HAVE DIED IF I SAW ANY ROMAN STATUES OR PAINTINGS OR THE LIKE... OH, NO, MISS SHARP... ER... STELLA! ROMAN CIVILIZATION NEVER REALLY INTERESTED ME...

THE LOCK SNAPPED BEHIND THEM. STELLA LOOKED AROUND, RELIEVED. THE WALLS BORE WEIRD INSCRIPTIONS AND STRANGE DRAWINGS. AT ONE END OF THE ROOM STOOD THREE... THREE... STELLA GASPED...



MUMMY CASES! THREE OF THEM! YES, STELLA! EGYPTIAN CULTURE IS MY FORTÉ! I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE BURIAL PRACTICES OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS...

STELLA BACKED OFF. PROFESSOR FINLEY OPENED A CABINET AND DREW FORTH AN EGYPTIAN PRIEST'S MANTLE. HE DROPPED HIS ROBE, PLACED THE MANTLE ON HIS HEAD, AND CAME TOWARD HER... THE YARDS AND YARDS OF BURIAL GAUZE TRAILING BEHIND HIM...



IT'S AN INTERESTING PROCESS, STELLA... MUMMIFICATION...

NO! NO! CHOKES...

HEE, HEE! WELL, KIDDIES, THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP... FOR STELLA, THAT IS. PROFESSOR FINLEY HAS FOUR MUMMY CASES NOW, AND THERE ARE FOUR GIRLS MISSING FROM THE CAMPUS. STRANGE THING ABOUT 'ANCIENT CIVILIZATION' STUDENTS. THEY EITHER FLUNK OUT, DROP OUT, OR... HEE, HEE... DIE OUT. NOW, THE VAULT-KEEPER AWAITS WITH HIS GORY STORY! I'LL SEE YOU LATER WITH ANOTHER OF MY GRIM FAIRY TALES, INCIDENTALLY, IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED THE E.G. FAN-ADDICT CLUB... WHY FIGHT IT? IT'S BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US! DIG YOU LATER!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW IT'S MY TURN TO SHIVER YOUR TIMBERS. YEP, IT'S YOUR HOST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO PRESENT ANOTHER PIECE OF PUTRID PROSE FROM MY CREEPY COLLECTION OF TERROR-TOMES. THIS SCREAM-SELECTION OUGHT TO CHILL YOUR WATERY BLOOD! I CALL IT...

NO SILVER ATOLL!

WHEN WE BOARDED THE TRANS-PACIFIC AIRLINER IN SAN FRANCISCO, CLARK AND I WERE PERFECT STRANGERS. HE CHOSE THE SEAT BESIDE ME AND WE BEGAN TO TALK. BY HAWAII, WE WERE FRIENDS. BY WAKE ISLAND, WE WERE MORE THAN FRIENDS. BY GUAM, I WAS IN LOVE AND KNEW IT, AND WHEN THE ENGINE CAUGHT FIRE SOMEWHERE SOUTH-EAST OF THE PHILIPPINES, THE ONLY TERROR... THE ONLY FEAR I HAD... WAS NOW THAT I'D FOUND CLARK, I WAS GOING TO LOSE HIM...

CLARK! LOOK! THAT ENGINE! FLAMES!

GOOD LORD! THE PLANE'S ON FIRE!

ATTENTION ALL PASSENGERS! FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS! FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS! WE'RE GOING DOWN...



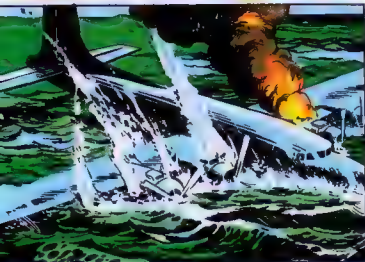
I REMEMBER THE STEWARDESS STUMBLING UP AND DOWN THE AISLE, COMFORTING US, REASSURING US, AND THE SCREAMING WHINE OF THE WIND OUTSIDE MIXING WITH THE SHRIEKS OF THE PASSENGERS INSIDE AS OUR PLANE DOVE SEAWARD. AND I REMEMBER HOW I TOOK CLARK'S HAND AND HELD IT TO MY TREMBLING LIPS...



D-DARLING! I-I'M F-FRIGHTENED...

EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT, RUTH! YOU'LL SEE...

THE PACIFIC CAME UP TO MEET US, BLUE AND VAST AND ROLLING, AND THE MOMENTS BEFORE WE HIT WERE ETERNITIES. THEN, THE SUDDEN SHOCK! THE SPRAY EXPLODING UPWARD AROUND US! THE HISSING OF THE FLAMING ENGINE AS THE SEA WATER ENVELOPED IT...



THE PLANE WENT DOWN NOSE FIRST IN A MATTER OF MINUTES. I SHUDDERED AS I WATCHED THE TAIL SECTION SINK SLOWLY BENEATH THE CHOPPY PACIFIC...

WHAT ISLAND IS THAT, CAPTAIN?

I DON'T KNOW! THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF ISLANDS IN THIS AREA ... MANY UNCHARTED!



HOURS LATER, WE PULLED OUR RAFTS UP ON A SPUME-LINED SLIMY SHORE. FOUL-SMELLING DRIFTWOOD AND REEKING SEAWEED COVERED THE NARROW STEAMING BEACH...

I THOUGHT THESE PACIFIC ATOLLS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE LITTLE PARADISES...

ONLY IN TRAVEL FOLDERS...



THERE IS PLENTY OF FRUIT GROWING ON THE ISLAND, AND PLENTY OF FISH IN THE LAGOON SO WE WON'T STARVE. WE'VE GOT ONE GUN, ONE BOX OF SHELLS, AND A MEDICAL KIT. WITH ALL THE DRIFTWOOD AROUND, WE CAN BUILD A SIGNAL PYRE, AND IF A PLANE OR A SHIP COMES BY, WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIGHT IT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION. SO, ALL IN ALL, OUR SITUATION COULD BE A LOT WORSE...



THEN, THE UTTER SCREAMING CONFUSION, AS WE REALIZED WE WERE SINKING. SOMEONE OPENED THE ESCAPE HATCH AND WE POURED OUT ONTO THE WING. MISS KIRBY, THE STEWARDESS, REMEMBERED TO SALVAGE THE MEDICAL KIT, AND THE PILOT, CAPTAIN MILLER, MANAGED TO INFLATE TWO LIFE RAFTS...

QUICKLY! GET INTO THE RAFTS. SHE'S SINKING FAST.

LOOK, CAPTAIN MILLER! LAND!

AN ISLAND!



AFTER WE'D CLEARED A CAMPSITE, CAPTAIN MILLER CALLED US ALL TOGETHER...

NOW, I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE ... IT MAY BE A WEEK... IT MAY BE SIX MONTHS. EVENTUALLY, WE'LL BE RESCUED. THIS IS NEAR THE SHIPPING LANES. IN ANY CASE, OUR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON EVERYONE'S COOPERATION!



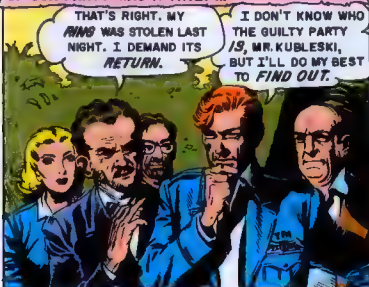
SO THERE WE WERE, ELEVEN HUMAN BEINGS MAROONED ON AN UNINHABITED TROPICAL ISLAND. THAT FIRST NIGHT, AS CLARK AND I SAT BESIDE EACH OTHER AND LISTENED TO THE SQUEALING TROPICAL BIRDS OFF IN THE DENSE OVERGROWTH, I NOTICED...

WHAT'S WRONG, CLARK? YOU LOOK WORRIED.

I... I AM, RUTH. WE'VE GOT TO BE RESCUED SOON. WE'VE JUST GOT TO.



A WEEK WENT BY. NO PLANE OR SHIP CAME NEAR OUR ISLAND. AND STRANGE THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN. **ONE OF OUR PARTY WAS A THIEF...**



THAT'S RIGHT, MY **RING** WAS STOLEN LAST NIGHT. I DEMAND ITS **RETURN**.

I DON'T KNOW WHO THE GUILTY PARTY IS, MR. KUBLESKI, BUT I'LL DO MY BEST TO **FIND OUT**.

EVERY NIGHT, SOMETHING ELSE WAS STOLEN FROM ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF OUR GROUP...



I CAN'T **UNDERSTAND IT**, CAPTAIN! MY **BELT-BUCKLE** WAS OF **LITTLE VALUE**. **WHO** WOULD WANT TO STEAL A **BELT-BUCKLE**?

ONE OF US IS A **GLEPTOMANIC**. I HAVE NO **ALTERNATIVE** BUT TO POST A **WATCH**. TWO OF US AT A TIME WILL **STAND GUARD** WHILE THE **OTHERS SLEEP**. THIS **PETTY THIEVERY** MUST BE **STOPPED**...

CAPTAIN MILLER FUMBLERED THROUGH HIS POCKETS...



I'LL FLIP A COIN TO SEE WHO...WHO...**THAT'S FUNNY!** I WAS **SURE** I HAD SOME CHANGE. ANYBODY GOT A **QUARTER**?

I **HAVE**, CAPTAIN! I...I...**THAT'S STRANGE**.

ONE BY ONE, WE ALL SEARCHED OUR POCKETS AND PURSES. IT WAS **INCREDIBLE**...

I HAD **PLENTY** OF CHANGE. I **REMEMBER!** NOW...I'VE ONLY A **PENNY** AND TWO **NICKELS**.

ALL OF MY **DIMES** AND **QUARTERS** ARE GONE... **STOLEN!**



THE THIEF, WHOEVER HE OR SHE WAS, HAD RIFLED THROUGH EVERYONE'S CLOTHES...PROBABLY WHILE WE SLEPT. BUT THE CURIOUS THING WAS...

HE'S **ONLY** TAKEN **DIMES** AND **QUARTERS** AND **HALF-DOLLARS!**

ALL MY **BILLS** ARE HERE. A **SILVER DOLLAR** I HAD IS **GONE**. MY **PENNIES** AND **NICKELS** ARE STILL HERE!



MISS KINBY, THE STEWARDESS GASPED...



MR. DAWSON, WHAT WAS YOUR **BELT BUCKLE** MADE OF?

SILVER! AND MY **RING!** MY **RING** WAS **SILVER**, TOO!

IT... IT SEEMS OUR **THIEF** IS ONLY INTERESTED IN **STEALING SILVER!** BUT **WHY?**

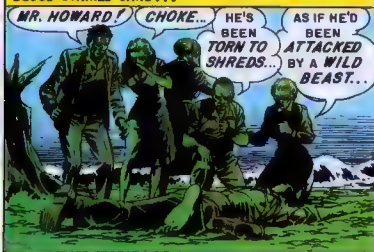
WE **FOUND OUT WHY!** ONE NIGHT AT THE END OF THE SECOND WEEK, I WAS AWAKENED TO THE BLOOD-CURLING SOUND OF SOMEONE SHRIEKING IN PAIN...



YAAAAHHHHH!

GOOD LORD! WHAT WAS THAT?

THE SCREAM HAD AWAKENED THE WHOLE CAMP. IT HAD COME FROM UP THE BEACH. WE ALL SCRAMBLED TOWARD THE SPOT. THE MOON CAST AN EERIE GREENISH GLOW ON EVERYTHING. HE WAS LYING FACE DOWNWARD ON THE BLOOD-STAINED SAND...



WE STARED AT EACH OTHER... ASHEN FACES IN THE PALE MOONLIGHT. CAPTAIN MILLER'S VOICE WAS COLD, EXPRESSIONLESS...



IN THE PORTION OF EUROPE WHERE I COME FROM, THERE IS A BELIEF THAT CERTAIN HUMAN BEINGS, WHEN THE MOON IS FULL, GRAVE THE FLESH OF OTHER HUMANS. WE CALL THEM WEREWOLVES!



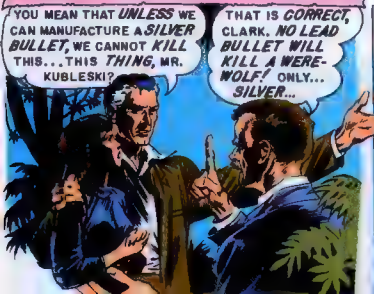
YOU... YOU MEAN THAT ONE OF US IS A WERE-WOLF, MR. KUBLESKI?



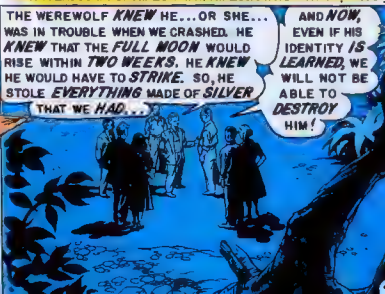
...AND IT IS ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO KILL A WEREWOLF IS TO SHOOT IT WITH A SILVER BULLET!



I SHIVERED IN THE TROPICAL NIGHT. CLARK CAME UP BEHIND ME AND SLIPPED HIS ARM AROUND MY SHOULDER...



I LOOKED AT THE FACES AROUND ME AS MR. KUBLESKI SPOKE. CAPTAIN MILLER... MR. DAWSON... MISS KIRBY... MR. ANSEN... MRS. AMES... MR. AMES... WHO WAS IT? WHO?



IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, I SCARCELY LEFT CLARK'S SIDE. I WAS FRIGHTENED AND HE WAS THE ONLY ONE I COULD TURN TO...

CLARK! NEXT WEEK IS THE FULL MOON AGAIN! WHAT WILL WE DO? WHAT IF IT STRIKES AGAIN!

I'LL PROTECT YOU, HONEY! DON'T WORRY!



AND THEN, IT HAPPENED AGAIN. FOUR WEEKS AFTER THE FIRST MURDER, ON THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, A HORRIBLE SHRIEK ECHOED ACROSS OUR TROPIC ISLAND...



AND WHEN WE GOT TO MISS KIRBY'S LEAN-TO, WE FOUND HER PALE WHITE BODY TORN AND SHREDDED AND STREAKED RED WITH BLOOD...

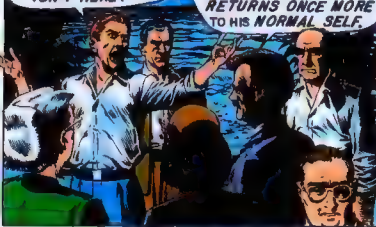
CHOKES... THE WEREWOLF HAS STRUCK AGAIN!



CAPTAIN MILLER SHOUTED...

ALL RIGHT! WE'LL FIND OUT WHO IT IS! WHO'S MISSING? QUICKLY! LOOK AROUND! WHO ISN'T HERE?

DON'T BOTHER LOOKING, CAPTAIN! IT IS TOO LATE! ONCE THE WEREWOLF'S HUNGER FOR HUMAN FLESH IS SATISFIED, HE RETURNS ONCE MORE TO HIS NORMAL SELF.



MR. KUBLESKI LOOKED AROUND...

HE IS NO DOUBT RIGHT HERE AMONG US AT THE PRESENT MOMENT!

ARE THERE ANY TESTS, MR. KUBLESKI... ANY WAYS OF TELLING WHO IS A WEREWOLF?



DURING THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE RISE OF THE FULL MOON, THERE ARE VERY FEW, CLARK! WEREWOLVES ARE MORTALLY AFRAID OF GARLIC. IN THE OLD COUNTRY, MANY PEASANTS STILL HANG GARLIC ON THEIR DOORS AT FULL MOON TIME. AS THE FULL MOON RISES, THE WEREWOLVES EYES TURN RED. A PENTAGRAM IS SEEN ON THE PALM OF HIS INTENDED VICTIM. HIS EYEBROWS MERGE... HIS FACE GROWS HAIRY... HIS TEETH LENGTHEN...



AND THEN, AT EXACTLY THE MOMENT OF THE FULL MOON, THE TRANSFORMATION IS COMPLETE. HE IS, IN FACT, A VERITABLE HUMAN WOLF.

LORD! WHERE CAN WE GET ENOUGH SILVER TO FASHION A SILVER BULLET? WE'VE GOT TO DESTROY THIS GOD-AWFUL CREATURE...



WITH MISS KIRBY'S DEATH, I BECAME GUARDIAN OF THE MEDICAL KIT. ALTHOUGH MY TRAINING CONSISTED ONLY OF A SHORT NURSE'S AIDE COURSE DURING THE WAR, I NEVERTHELESS MANAGED TO PATCH UP THE VARIOUS CUTS AND BRUISES SUFFERED BY THE MEMBERS OF OUR PARTY. . .



DO YOU THINK A SHIP WILL *EVER* COME, CLARK?

I CERTAINLY *HOPE* SO, RUTH! I'M SO SICK OF *FISH AND FRUIT!*

ONE DAY I WAS WALKING DOWN ALONG THE BEACH WHEN I NOTICED A CRATE THAT HAD WASHED ASHORE. I READ THE FADED STENCIL MARKINGS. . .

'U.S. ARMY... QUARTERMASTER CORPS... FIELD RATIONS...'



CLARK CAME ON THE RUN. I POINTED TO THE ROTTED CRATE... LAUGHING...



YOU *WANTED* SOMETHING ELSE BESIDE *FISH AND FRUIT*, DARLING! WELL, *HERE YOU ARE*...

CHOKE...

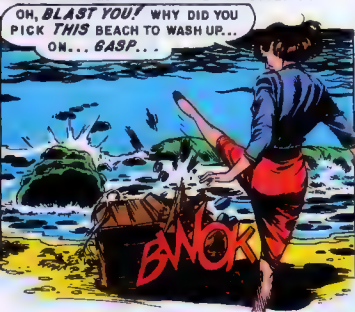
CLARK RECOILED IN HORROR. HE WALKED AWAY... MUTTERING...



...VERY FUNNY!

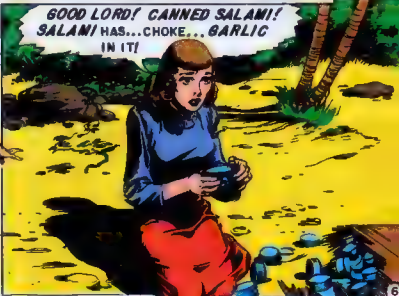
CLARK, HONEY! I WAS ONLY JOKING! PLEASE DON'T BE ANGRY...

HE WALKED ON UP TO CAMP, NEVER ONCE LOOKING BACK. I KICKED AT THE CRATE FURIOUSLY...



OH, *BLAST YOU!* WHY DID YOU PICK *THIS* BEACH TO WASH UP... ON... *GASP*...

THE ROTTED CRATE FELL APART. THE CANS ROLLED OUT OVER THE SAND. I PICKED ONE UP, THE STAMPED LETTERS DENOTING ITS CONTENTS WAS STILL LEGIBLE...



GOOD LORD! CANNED SALAMI! SALAMI HAS... CHOKES... GARLIC IN IT!

I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT. I PRAYED I WAS **WRONG**. CLARK... THE **WEREWOLF!** HOW COULD IT BE? I LOVED CLARK. I WANTED TO MARRY HIM WHEN ALL THIS WAS OVER. I HAD TO BE **SURE**. I WENT BACK TO MY LEAN-TO...

THERE'S A **CALENDAR** SOMEWHERE! I **KNOW** IT! I **SAW** IT! I...I... I **REMEMBER** THE **MEDICAL KIT!**



I OPENED THE **MEDICAL KIT**. I STUDIED THE **CALENDAR**. TONIGHT... TONIGHT WAS TO BE THE **FULL MOON**. I STARTED TO CLOSE THE **MEDICAL KIT**, WHEN SOMETHING CAUGHT MY EYE...

OF COURSE! HOW **STUPID** OF ME NOT TO HAVE **THOUGHT** OF THIS BEFORE!



THAT NIGHT I WENT TO CLARK'S LEAN-TO. HE LOOKED UP AT ME SADLY...

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO **FIND OUT?** WE COULD HAVE BEEN SO **HAPPY** TOGETHER NOW...

I **KNOW**, CLARK! LOOK! MY **PALM!** THE **PENTAGRAM!** YOU'RE GOING TO **KILL** ME!



THE **MOONLIGHT** STREAMED IN UPON HIS FACE AS HE CHANGED... AS HIS **EYEBROWS** MERGED...



EXACTLY...

...AS HIS EYES TURNED **RED** AND HIS **TEETH** LENGTHENED AND THE **HAIR** GREW OUT OF HIS **FACE**...



I HAVE TO!

...AND HE **SNARLED** AND **SPRANG** AT ME, **SLOBBERING**...



...AND I **PLUNGED** THE **HYPODERMIC NEEDLE** INTO HIS **CHEST**...



CAPTAIN MILLER CAME AND LOOKED AT CLARK'S DEAD BODY LYING IN THE **MOONLIGHT** AND THEN HE STARED AT ME QUESTIONINGLY AS I HANDED HIM THE **EMPTY HYPODERMIC I'D FILLED WITH SILVER NITRATE** FROM THE **BOTTLE I'D FOUND IN THE MEDICAL KIT**...

IT...IT **WORKED**...SOB... LIKE A **SILVER BULLET!** YOU CAN TELL... SOB... MR. KUBLESKI...



GOOD LORD!

HEH, HEH! THAT'S **RUTHY'S YARN**, KIDDIES, EXACTLY AS SHE TOLD IT TO ME. HOW COME SHE **MET** ME, YOU ASK? SO **WHO** DO YOU THINK **RESCUED** HER AND THE OTHER CRUMBS? **NATCH!** ME! YOU SEE, I WAS TAKING A **LITTLE CRUISE** THIS SUMMER ON MY **GHOST SHIP** AND... WELL, THAT'S **ANOTHER STORY!** I'LL SAVE IT TILL **SOME OTHER TIME**. NOW



IT'S TIME TO **CLOSE UP** THE **VAULT OF HORROR** FOR THIS **ISSUE OF O.W.'S MAG**, AND TURN YOU **BACK** TO HER. SO, 'BYE, NOW. AND... AS THE **UNDER-TAKER** SAID WHEN HE PAINTED HIS **COFFIN-CART RED**, "THIS IS A **HEARSE** OF A **DIF-FERENT COLOR!**"

THE OLD WITCH'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HERE'S THE LATEST IN MY FAIRY TALE DEBUNKING CAMPAIGN, KIDDIES. THIS IS THE **REAL SCOOP**... THE **TRUE FACTS** BEHIND THE NAUSEATING NONSENSE THAT YOU'VE READ AB...

HANSEL and GRETEL!

Y'SEE, ACTUALLY, THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS WIFE AND TWO KIDS **WEREN'T** SO **BAD OFF**. THEY **WEREN'T** SO **POOR** THAT THEY **COULDN'T** **BUY** **FOOD** LIKE IN THE VERSIONS **YOU'VE** **READ**. IN FACT, THE OLD MAN WAS DOING **ALL RIGHT**, WHAT WITH THE **HOUSING BOOM** AND THE **6.15** **BACK** FROM THE **CRUSADES**. THE **REAL TROUBLE** WAS...



GOOD LORD, WIFE! THEM KIDS! THEY'RE EATING AGAIN!

THAT'S ALL THEY DO IS EAT! EAT, EAT, EAT! YOU'LL HAVE TO INCREASE MY ALLOWANCE. I JUST CAN'T MANAGE WITH THEM EATING LIKE THAT!

CHOMP... CHOMP...

CHOMP... CHOMP...



STOP WITH THE 'INCREASE MY ALLOWANCE' ROUTINE! I'M HANDING OVER MY WHOLE PAY BAG NOW. WHY, I STILL OWE A FEW DUCATS ON MY NEW AXE. EVERY TIME THE COLLECTOR COMES, I GOT TO DUCAT....

... AND THERE'S AN **INSTALLMENT** DUE ON THE NEW **WASH TUB**. OH, WHAT WILL WE DO?

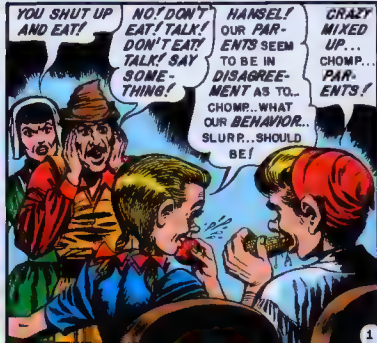
CHOMP... CHOMP... WEAR **DIRTY CLOTHES!** CHOMP...

YOU SHUT UP AND EAT!

NO! DON'T EAT! TALK! DON'T EAT! TALK! SAY SOMETHING!

HANSEL! OUR PARENTS SEEM TO BE IN DISAGREEMENT AS TO... CHOMP... WHAT OUR BEHAVIOR... SLURP... SHOULD BE!

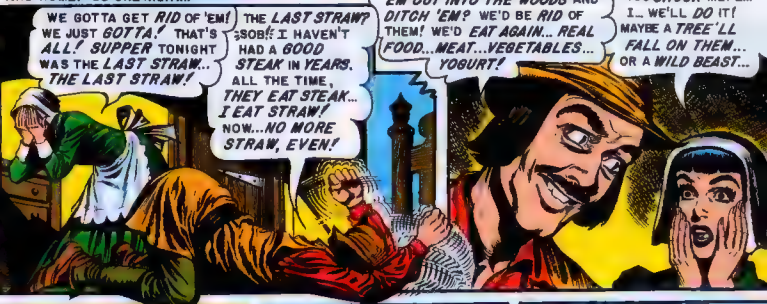
CRAZY MIXED UP... CHOMP... PARENTS!



GET THE PICTURE, KIDDIES! ACTUALLY THESE TWO BRATS WERE EATING THEIR FOLKS OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME. SO ONE NIGHT...

NOW, DON'T GET EXCITED... I GOT A SUGGESTION! WHAT SAY I TAKE 'EM OUT INTO THE WOODS AND DITCH 'EM? WE'D BE RID OF THEM! WE'D EAT AGAIN... REAL FOOD... MEAT... VEGETABLES... YOGURT!

HUSBAND, DEAR! HOW COULD YOU? YOU SHOCK ME! I... I... WE'LL DO IT! MAYBE A TREE'LL FALL ON THEM... OR A WILD BEAST...



ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FLIMSY WALL OF THEIR PRE-FAB WOODCUTTER'S CABIN, HANSEL AND GRETEL LISTENED...

CHOMP...CHOMP... D'YA HEAR THAT? THEY'RE GONNA DITCH US, HANS.

DON'T GET DISPEPSIA, SIS. I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING. PASS ME THE WORSTERSH... THE WORSTSHI... THE KETCHUP!



LATER, WHEN EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP, HANSEL TIP-TOED OUTSIDE AND GATHERED UP SOME WHITE PEBBLES...

I'M NO FOOL. I PASSED MY JUNIOR FORESTER'S MERIT BADGE TEST! I'M CLEVER! I'M... I'M HUNGRY!



AND SO, THE NEXT DAY, WHEN THE WOODCUTTER LED THE CHILDREN INTO THE FOREST, HANSEL WAS READY...

COME, KIDDIES! FOLLOW ME! WE WILL GO DEEP INTO THE WOODS. WE WILL HAVE A PICNIC. WE WILL...

NOTICE, SISTER! AS WE PROCEED INTO THE IMPENETRABLE... THE IMPENETRABLE... THE THICK FOREST, I KEEP DROPPING PEBBLES!



FINALLY, DEEP IN THE FOREST, THE WOODCUTTER TURNED...

WELL! THIS IS IT! THE FINISH! THE PAY-OFF! YOU TWO ARE THROUGH... DONE... WASHED UP! IT'S THE END OF THE LINE...

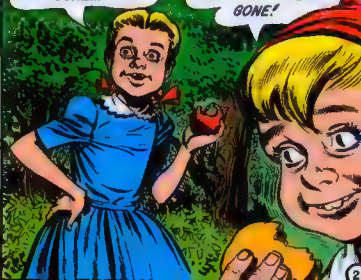
FATHER'S BEEN READING MICKEY SPILLANE! CHOMP... CHOMP... ME TOO! VA-VA-VOOM!



AND THEN, WITHOUT A WORD, THE WOODCUTTER DASHED OFF, LEAVING HIS TWO CHILDREN STRANDED...

IS HE GONE... CHOMP?

HE'S...CHOMP...REAL GONE!



THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE MOON
CAME UP AND THE SHINY PEBBLES
THAT HANSEL HAD DROPPED GLITTERED
LIKE NEWLY MINTED SUBWAY TOKENS,
THE CHILDREN RETRACED THEIR STEPS.



WE'RE ALMOST
HOME, HANSEL!

YES, I CAN
HEAR THE
WILD CHEER-
ING AND
HYSTERICAL
LAUGHING!

THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS WIFE
HAD JUST SAT DOWN TO THEIR
FIRST SQUARE MEAL IN YEARS WHEN
THE DOOR TO THEIR TINY COTTAGE
SWUNG OPEN...



YUM!
YUM!
STEAK!

AND
MASHED
POTATOES!
AND...

**SUR-
PRISE!**



OH, NO! CHOKE!
MMMM! FOOD! WE'RE
STARVED!
PASS THE
WORCESTERSHIRE!
THE WORSTERSHIRE!
THE WORSTHIRE!
THE KETCHUP!

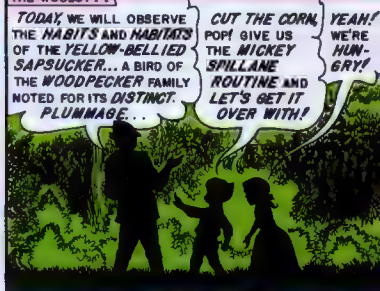
THAT NIGHT, THE WOODCUTTER AND HIS WIFE PLOTTED...



WE'VE GOT TO TRY IT
AGAIN, WIFE! AND THIS
TIME, WE'VE GOT TO DO
THE JOB RIGHT.

OKAY! OKAY! NOW PASS
ME THAT BONE. IT'S MY
TURN TO GNAW ON IT!

AND SO, THE NEXT MORNING, THE WOODCUTTER AGAIN
LED HIS DARLINGS INTO THE IMPENETRA...THE IMPENETRA...
THE WOODS...

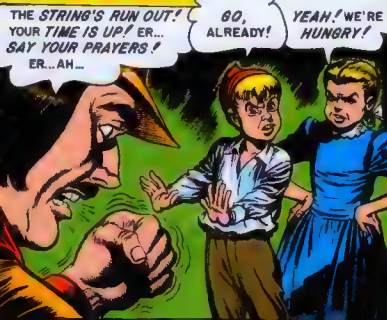


TODAY, WE WILL OBSERVE
THE HABITS AND HABITATS
OF THE YELLOW-BELLIED
SAPSUCKER... A BIRD OF
THE WOODPECKER FAMILY
NOTED FOR ITS DISTINCT
PLUMMAGE...

CUT THE CORN, POPI! GIVE US
THE MICKEY SPILLANE
ROUTINE AND
LET'S GET IT
OVER WITH!

YEAH!
WE'RE
HUN-
GRY!

THE WOODCUTTER TURNED...

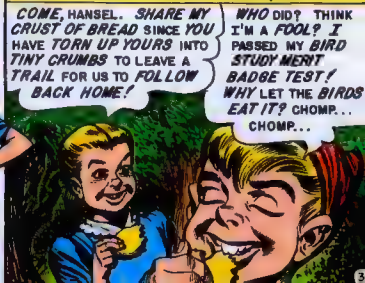


THE STRING'S RUN OUT!
YOUR TIME IS UP! ER...
SAY YOUR PRAYERS!
ER...AH...

GO,
ALREADY!

YEAH! WE'RE
HUNGRY!

THE WOODCUTTER DASHED OFF LEAVING THE TWO
CHILDREN DEEP IN THE FOREST... (HEH, HEH... THOUGHT
I'D SAY IMPENETRA... IMPENETRA... THICK, EH?)...



COME, HANSEL. SHARE MY
CRUST OF BREAD SINCE YOU
HAVE TORN UP YOURS INTO
TINY CRUMBS TO LEAVE A
TRAIL FOR US TO FOLLOW
BACK HOME!

WHO DID? THINK
I'M A FOOL? I
PASSED MY BIRD
STUDY MERIT
BADGE TEST!
WHY LET THE BIRDS
EAT IT? CHOMP...
CHOMP...

AND SO, HANSEL AND GRETEL WERE REALLY LOST THIS TIME. BUT DO YOU THINK THEY CARE? DO YOU THINK THEY WORRIED? YOU'RE DARN RIGHT THEY DID! AFTER ALL, IN A FEW HOURS, THEY GOT... YOU GUESSED IT...

...HUNGRY! I'M STARVED, HANSEL!

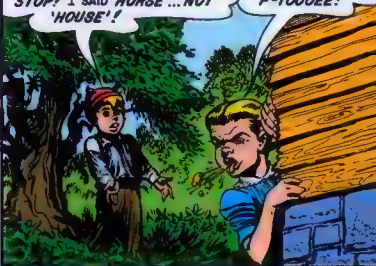
ME TOO! I COULD EAT A HORSE! I...I...LOOK!



IT STOOD BEFORE THEM IN THE CLEARING, THE TINY COTTAGE! GRETEL RAN TOWARD IT, Slobbering...

GRETEL! COME BACK! DON'T! STOP! I SAID 'HORSE'... NOT 'HOUSE'!

CHOMP...CHOMP... P-TOOOEE!



Y'SEE, KIDDIES? Y'SEE HOW THE TRUTH CAN BE DISTORTED? THIS WASN'T ANY CANDY HOUSE LIKE IN THE VERSIONS YOU'VE READ. IT WAS A GOOD SUBSTANTIAL BRICK, FIELDSTONE, AND CLAPBOARD COTTAGE...(WITH FOUR ROOMS AND ONE AND ONE-HALF BATHS...SIXTY BY A HUNDRED...\$2,000 DOWN...BALANCE AT FIVE %, TWENTY YEARS...DEALS FOR G.I.'S!) ONLY 'CAUSE HANSEL SAID HE COULD EAT A HORSE... GRETEL MISUNDERSTOOD HIM.

SEE? HUH? SEE? HUH?



...SO NATURALLY THE LITTLE OLD PENSIONED WIDOW WHO LIVED THERE ASKED...

NIBBLING, NIBBLING... LIKE A MOUSE, WHO'S THAT NIBBLING AT MY HOUSE?

AW, SHUT UP, Y'OLD BAT!



I'M NOT KIDDING! SHE WAS NO WITCH! LISTEN! I OUGHT TO KNOW A WITCH WHEN I SEE ONE. THIS OLD LADY WAS A SWEET LITTLE OLD THING...

MY LAN! CHILDREN! ARE YOU HUNGRY? COME INSIDE.

GANGS- ONE WAY! SIDE, Y'OLD BAG!



THIS LITTLE OLD LADY, KIND-HEARTED SOUL THAT SHE WAS, LISTENED TO HANSEL AND GRETEL'S STORY...

AND SINCE MAMA AND PAPA... CHOMP... COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY US FOOD... THEY LEFT US IN THE WOODS TO DIE... CHOMP... BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE US... SLURP... SUFFER!

CHOMP... SAD, AIN'T IT?

SOB... SOB! OH... YES!



...AND FELL FOR IT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER...

YOU TWO LITTLE DARLINGS CAN STAY HERE! I'LL FEED YOU! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU! I'LL BUY YOU PRETTY CLOTHES... TOYS... CANDY... SODAS... MALTEDS...

HANSEL! THIS OLD BAT MUST BE LOADED!

JUST SHUT UP AND PLAY ALONG!



THIS LITTLE OLD LADY **BEGGED** THEM BRATS TO STAY WITH HER...

PLEASE SAY 'YES!' I'VE BEEN **SO** LONELY SINCE MY **HUSBAND** DIED LAST YEAR AND LEFT ME WITH ALL THIS **USELESS** WEALTH...

CHOKES...

...SHOWED THEM HER JEWELS...HER GOLD...

USELESS, I SAY... BECAUSE WHAT GOOD IS MONEY IF IT CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS?

IT CAN BUY MEAT! CAN IT, SIS!

NOT CANNED MEAT, HANS! NICE THICK FRESH...

KNOCK IT OFF! LISTEN! AND I WILL MAKE ME SO HAPPY IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO SPEND ALL THIS ON YOU TWO!

GRANDMA! YOU GOT A DEAL!

YEAH! WE ACCEPT!

OH...YOU'VE MADE ME **SO** HAPPY! IF...IF I **KNEW** YOU WERE **COMIN'** I'DVE BAKED A CAKE!

BOINNINGS!

WHY NOT BAKE ONE NOW, GRANDMA?

I WILL! I WILL!

YOU STAY HERE, AND I'LL GO GET THE **FIREWOOD!** STAY RIGHT **HERE**, NOW...

WE'RE NOT **BUDGIN'**, GRANNY!

NO! WE'RE **SETTIN'...** BUT **DEF!**

BUT AS SOON AS THE LITTLE OLD LADY WAS GONE, HANSEL AND GRETEL RUSHED TO HER TREASURE CHEST...

MAN! DIG THIS COOL ICE!

ALL WE DO IS GET **RID** OF THE OLD BAG AND IT'S **ALL OURS!** NOW **HERE'S** THE PLAN!

SO YOU SEE, KIDDIES, THIS LITTLE OLD LADY **WASN'T** GETTING READY TO **ROAST THE BRATS ALIVE!** ALL SHE WAS DOING WAS GETTING THE FIRE STARTED IN THE OVEN TO BAKE A **CAKE** IN CELEBRATION OF HANSEL AND GRETEL'S COMING TO LIVE WITH HER...



...AND LISTENED TO HER BURN TO A CRISP...
SHE **GONE** YET...CHOMP? REAL...CHOMP...**GONE!**



AND WENT HOME TO THEIR LOVING MOTHER AND FATHER'S CABIN AND TOLD THEM THE FANTASTIC STORY THAT **YOU'VE BELIEVED...**

AND **THAT'S IT.** TO **SAVE OURSELVES** FROM BEING **ROASTED ALIVE,** WE PUSHED **HER** INTO THE OVEN. AND THEN WE FOUND **THESE...**

GOOD LORD! JEWELS! GOLD!

WELCOME HOME, DARLINGS!



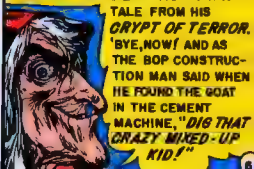
...WHEN HANSEL AND GRETEL **SLOPPED** HER IN...



THEN THEY TOOK ALL OF THE POOR OLD LADY'S JEWELS...
SOME HAUL! THINK OF THE **FOOD** THIS WILL BUY!



...BELIEVED UP TO **NOW,** THAT IS! **NOW,** OF COURSE, YOU **KNOW** THE **TRUE STORY** OF **HANSEL AND GRETEL.** **GRIM,** EH? WELL, THAT'S THE **NAME** OF THIS DEPARTMENT! **NEXT TIME,** I'LL TELL YOU... ER... WELL... LET'S JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT MY **IDIOT EDITORS DREAM UP.** NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE **CRYPT-KEEPER** WHO WILL **WIND UP** MY **REEK RAG** WITH A



TALE FROM HIS **CRYPT OF TERROR.** 'BYE, NOW! AND AS THE **BOP CONSTRUCTION** MAN SAID WHEN HE FOUND THE **GOAT** IN THE **CEMENT MACHINE,** "DIG THAT **CRAZY MIXED-UP KID!"**

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR ME, YOUR *CRYPT-KEEPER*, TO *WIND UP* THE OLD BAG'S MAG. SO, SINCE YOU'VE BEEN *TUCKED AWAY* WITH A LITTLE *FAIRY TALE*. . . PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A *NIGHTMARE* FROM ME! COME... COME WITH ME TO THE LAND OF THE *OKEFENOKEE*. . . SOUTH... *SOUTH* OF SOUTH... WHERE VARMINT PITS AGAINST MAN, AND ONLY THE WITTIEST SURVIVE. OUR HERO WILL BE THE WITTIEST, EVEN THOUGH HE'S JUST HALF-*SO*. THIS TALE, I CALL...

COUNTRY CLUBBING!



FAR OFF, THE SWAMPS ECHOED WITH THE BLOOD-CURDLING YELPS OF BLOOD HOUNDS. FOR ON THIS DARK NIGHT, THE CHAIN GANG WAS SEARCHING FOR ONE ESCAPED CONVICT. . .



AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS WILD, BREATHLESS BABBLING, A LIGHT BREAKS THROUGH THE DARKNESS...



A SHACK!
THEY'LL HAVE
FOOD!

I'LL KILL 'EM...KILL 'EM
DEAD! STUPID ROTTEN
PEOPLE OUGHTA BE DEAD
FER JUST LIVIN' IN THIS
SMELLY HOG SLOP!



THIS HERE CYPRESS STICK'LL
MAKE ME A GOOD CLUB!
BEAT THEIR BRAINS OUT!
...BEAT 'EM OUT DEAD!



WOMAN!...



GIMME THET...



...THERE FOOD!



I'M HUNGRY!

THE CONVICT QUIVERED AND CONVULSED WITH THE EXCITEMENT OF FOOD AT LAST! FOOD... ALL FOR HIM AND NO ONE ELSE... HIM ALONE!



...ALONE?

IT STOOD HUGE AND UGLY. IT WAS A MAN...THE DEAD WOMAN'S MAN. HIS FACE WOULD SCARE THE WITS OUT OF *ANY* STRIPED SKUNK...



...AND IT DID!



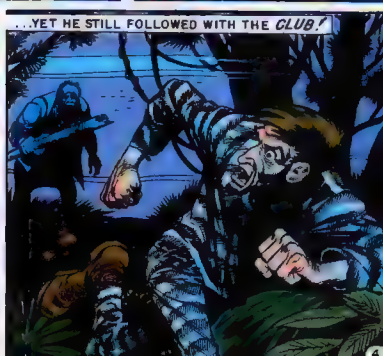
BACK OUT INTO THE DARKNESS AND THE SWAMPS HE RAN. EVEN THE HOUNDS WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM THAN THIS GHOULISH-LOOKING MONSTER...



...YET HE STILL FOLLOWED...WITH THE CLUB!



HIS WILD RUNNING BROUGHT HIM BACK ONTO THE PATH OF THE BAYING BLOOD HOUNDS...THEIR THROATS SORE AND EAGER FOR A SWALLOW OF FLESH...



IF THAT CRAZY CRITTER
THINKS HE'S GONNA KETCH
ME, HE BETTER GET A BOAT,
'CAUSE I'M TRAVLIN' ON
WATER FROM HERE OUT!

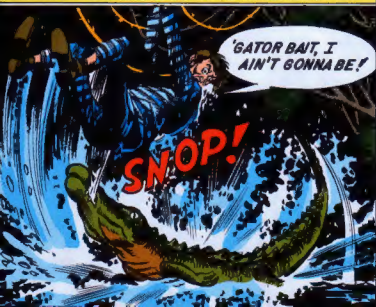


THE CONVICT WADED INTO THE BLACK SWAMP WATER
AFTER A FLOATING LOG THAT WOULD CARRY HIM TO
FREEDOM. . .

CAN'T SEE TOO WELL!
THIS LOG'LL DO!



WITH CRAZED STRENGTH, THE CONVICT GRABBED A
DANGLING VINE AND CLIMBED TO SAFETY. . .



...YET HE STILL FOLLOWED WITH THE CLUB!



AS HE UNTANGLED HIMSELF FROM THE VINES THAT TWISTED AROUND HIS ARMS AND LEGS, ONE VINE BEGAN TO MOVE...



TRUE! IT WAS A SNAKE... A LONG, BROWN AND YELLOW COTTONMOUTH SNAKE. AND IT SANK ITS TEETH INTO THE CONVICT, EJECTING ITS STORED UP VENOM...



IN HIS FIT OF FEAR AND ANGER, HE BEAT THE REPTILE TO DEATH...



SUDDENLY, THE SWAMP ANSWERED BACK TO HIM WITH A WILD HUM OF GNATS AND MOSQUITOES...



...FOLLOWED BY PURSUING BATS, FLAPPING AND FRIGHTNING THE CONVICT DEEPER INTO THE SWAMP...



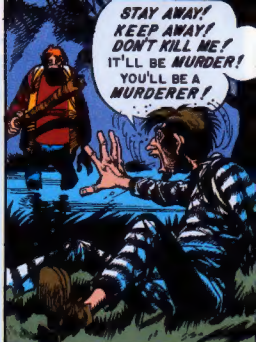
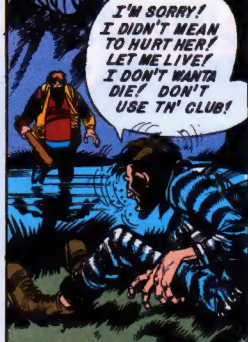
HE RAN WILD. FEAR, NOW, HAD CONTROL OF HIS CRIMINAL BRAIN. ONLY *INSTINCT* KEPT HIM FIGHTING TO ESCAPE THE MURDERED WOMAN'S MAN...



...YET HE STILL FOLLOWED WITH THE CLUB!



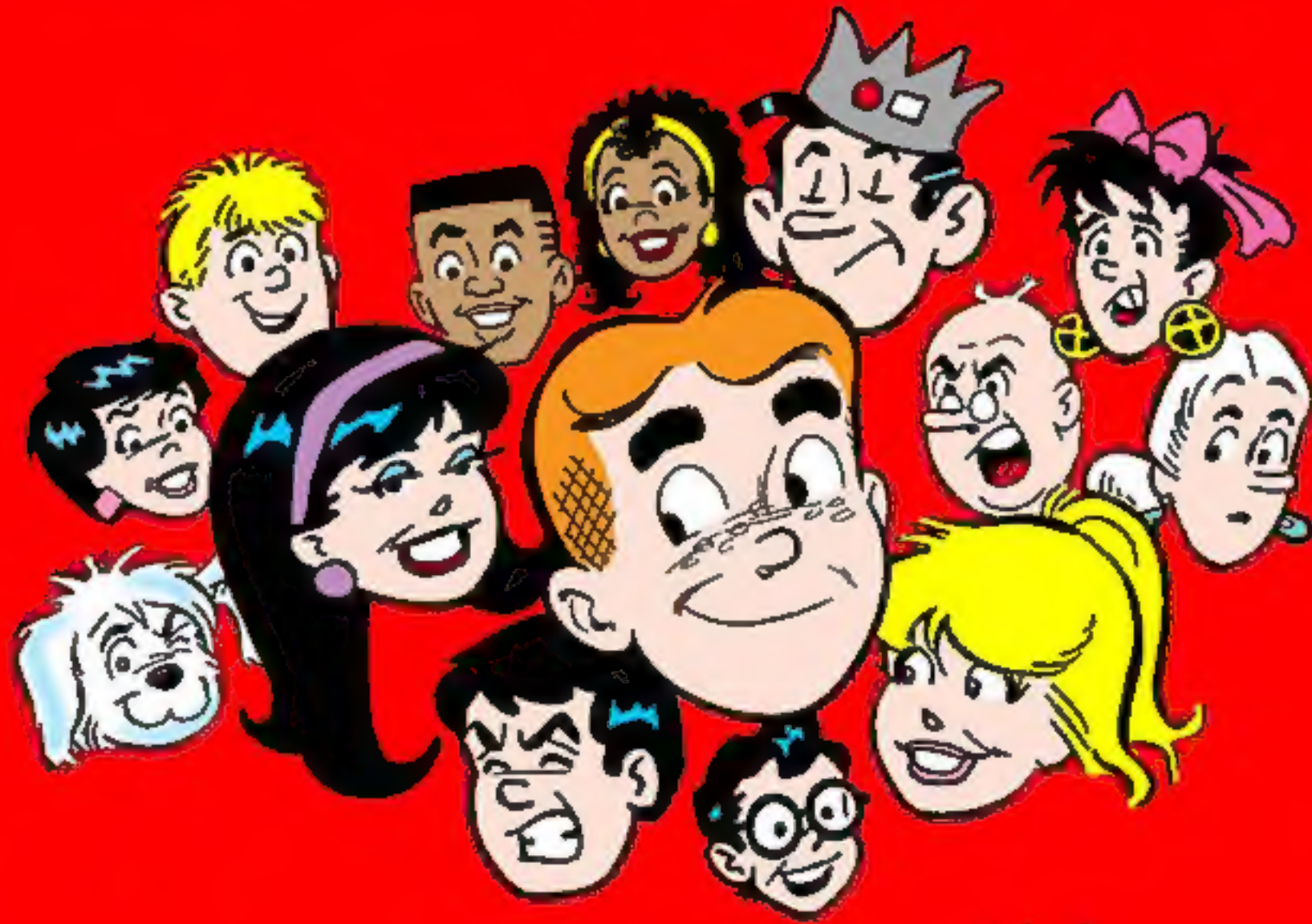
THE OKEFENOKEE WAS NOW SAPPED
ALL OF HIS ENERGY. HE COULDN'T
GO ON. THIS WAS IT...



AND SO WE LEAVE OUR CONVICT FRIEND... JIBBERING AWAY... A RAVING MANIAC DEEP IN THE OKEFENOKEE. SOMETHING JUST... SHALL WE SAY... **SNAPPED**, WHEN THE **BIG SLOB** PRACTICED HIS SOUTHERN OKEY HOSPITALITY... WHICH IS: **ALWAYS RETURN THINGS THAT AIN'T RIGHTFULLY YOURS.** WELL THAT ABOUT WINDS UP O.W.'S MORBID MAG, WHICH **IS** RIGHTFULLY YOURN, WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, **TALES FROM THE CRYPT!** OH, BY THE WAY, DID YOU **FOR-**

GET ABOUT THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB? NO? HMMM! THAT'S TOO BAD! 'BYE, NOW... **E.C.**, THAT IS!





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